

from country music to wedding bells

After traveling the world as a hair and makeup guru to the stars, Debra Wingo returns to her native soil.



There are few things that weddings and country music have in common, except, perhaps, Debra Wingo. As a renowned hair and makeup artist, Wingo has had the opportunity to work with music stars, actors, and models for both national and international projects. Unfortunately, the entertainment industry pressed pause during the COVID-19 pandemic, causing Wingo's work to decrease. With her daughter and grandchildren living in Madison, the Nashville native picked up her roots and planted them in Yazoo clay. Bringing her sponges and brushes with her, she set out to forge a new career path—making bridal dreams come true.

After finishing cosmetology school in her early 20s, Wingo began working as a hair and makeup artist in the heart of Nashville, surrounded by walls of mirrors

that reflected the faces of country music stars. "I worked with a lot of 'old time' country people," says Wingo. "I was super young...it was so exciting!" It did not take long for her work to expand to chairs outside of the salon. Instead of going to work each day encompassed by four walls, she put makeup on artists underneath the shade of towering redwood trees as cameras rolled in the background. Wingo's work has taken her from the hillsides of Spain to the snowcapped mountains of Montana. Her career has allowed her to work alongside legends like Nicole Kidman, Miranda Lambert, Lionel Richie, and Niki Taylor.

Prior to moving to Mississippi, Wingo worked as Keith Urban's personal hair and makeup artist. For 18 years, she followed Urban to talk shows, concerts,

writer CHATHAM KENNEDY

EXHIBIT

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THIS PAGE: Debra Wingo frequently worked with Garth Brooks and his wife Tricia Yearwood. Her job often included long days on the set of music videos, including Dierks Bentley. Back home in Mississippi, Wingo is now happily helping brides and other clients with big days. Wingo was Keith Urban's personal hair and makeup stylist for 18 years. OPPOSITE: Wingo is thrilled to be back home in Mississippi.

and, of course, The Grammy Awards. She spent her nights helping Urban prepare for his upcoming performances and her days traveling to the next location. "He would take me on tour with him. I've gotten to see a lot of the world in that way," says Wingo. Whether she was traversing across America, styling Crystal Gayle's mile-long hair, or preparing LeAnn Rimes for a movie shoot, there was never a moment when she was not pursuing her passion.

For Wingo, when passion and intention collide, creative chaos ensues. Editorial work and special effects jobs have given the artist immense creative liberty. From turning a

woman into a stone statue to sculpting new identities, no day is ever the same. However, the one thing that remains is Wingo's devotion to making her clients look and feel their best. To instill confidence is, perhaps, the greatest gift the brush gives her—the confidence to look into the camera, the audience, or the eyes of one's soon-to-be spouse with absolute self-assurance. "That's what I want to do for brides and their families," says Wingo, "to give them the confidence to face...the love of their life." Whether behind the camera or the church doors, Wingo is eager to turn her clients' dreams into reality. *M*

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